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**The Military and**  
**Indian Democracy**

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## I Introduction

The military dominate politics in almost half of the "developing" states of the world, and in most of the others it is not far from power [1] Until quite recently the armed forces were a major political force in many European nations, in the Leninist states it remains under civilian control, but only because the dominant party -- following Lenin's lead -- has militarized itself

India stands as a remarkable exception to the prevalence of military dominance, or influence For years, outsiders and Indians have been predicting the imminent "takeover" of the Indian army but it is today as far from seizing power as it was thirty years ago The Indian army remains an outstanding example of an apolitical, professional force almost the model of a bureaucratic instrument of state policy This is all the more remarkable when the Indian experience is compared with that of Pakistan and Bangladesh, states which share not only South Asian culture and geography, but the British military tradition [2]

The present, compatible relationship between the military and India's democracy did not just happen Nehru, Patel, and other Indian politicians, as well as their civilian advisers, had a clear idea of what elements of the "British tradition" they wanted to keep and which they wanted to discard Even then, there were numerous turning points between 1947 and 1985 where things might have taken a different direction the army was successfully transferred from British to Indian leadership the officer corps underwent a dramatic change in its social base, the army suffered and recovered from a severe and humiliating defeat There have been lesser adjustments as well all three services have had to run fast merely to keep up with new military technologies, the army has again been asked to perform demanding domestic roles (especially

internal security) and from 1980 onward, India's national security apparatus has had to figure out a way to manage a strategic alliance with a major weapons supplier that is at the same time an occupying power in a neighboring state

Lesser crises have triggered military intervention in a number of states India surprises because the military have not intervened A coup is not likely, impending, or inevitable More realistically, one can observe the slow expansion of military influence within the Indian political system, although in some ways that influence is considerably less than one encounters in several industrial democracies, most notably the U S One can also observe the militarization of Indian political discourse and the growth of an enormous military-industrial-political complex One can also point to the institutional anomaly of caste-based units recruited on a "martial races" basis, the great social distance between officer and jawan (even though they increasingly come from the same class background), and the presence of trappings left over from the British raj The most recent challenge to democratic values was the army's expanded role in governing Assam and Punjab, in addition to Mizoram and Nagaland in 1984 there were at least 40 million Indians living under military rule, if not military law, making India one of the world's largest military-dominated states -- while it was simultaneously the world's largest democracy

These examples suggest several important linkages and the need for a broad definition of the term "democracy " As for the former, it is important to remember that there are innumerable contacts between the military and the broader society which supports and sustains it, and which it is sworn to defend The armed forces deal with peasants and presidents, with village caste structures and nuclear delivery systems, they manipulate public opinion and they



are ultra-sensitive to that opinion, they draw their resources from Indian society, and they make important technical and cultural contributions to that society. These are not discrete, watertight activities. military intervention in several of India's neighbors was triggered by a variety of strategic, political, professional, and social causes, not merely the disobedience or ambition of a few generals. Similarly, the term "democracy" refers to both a process and a category.

We must examine the military. The question is not merely whether there will be a coup, changing India from "democracy" to "military dictatorship" [3]. Democracy has a participatory dimension, involving elections, change in leadership at local and state levels, not merely the national level (under Indira Gandhi plebiscitary democracy seemed to be evolving). Democracy also has a libertarian dimension. Is the ordinary citizen free from police harassment, unlawful search and seizure? Are civil rights protected, does one have the right to travel, and assemble, and is the press free? Finally, it has, in South Asia, a dual economic dimension. The first can be summed up in Mrs. Gandhi's phrase, "economic democracy," i.e. the prospect of a better life. The second is whether citizens have the material means with which to enter the political arena.

We do not regard the present role of the Indian military as anomalous, although it certainly is unique in many ways. It is not an historic accident but the product of careful planning. It has not been static, but has undergone significant structural and doctrinal change. What remains an open question is whether the pattern of gradual, adaptive change will continue. Recent events suggest it may not, and highlight the importance of a fresh look at the Indian military.

-- The salience of the military's coercive dominance within India has been recently dramatized with the breakdown of police and paramilitary forces in several states, after a major attempt to insulate the armed forces from civil disorder. When thousands of Sikh soldiers themselves mutinied after the occupation of the Golden Temple, the fragility of the barrier between a unified and a disintegrated India -- and the military's vital role in maintaining that barrier -- was emphasized as never before since 1947.

-- India's external security environment remains unsettled. Leaving aside the armed stalemate with China and the recent war scare with Pakistan (which emanated largely from the Indian side), new problems have arisen with Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, and after six years, the Soviet Union has increased military activity in that part of South Asia that it occupies.

-- Events elsewhere in South Asia suggest vulnerabilities in India's own political culture. Pakistan and Bangladesh underwent extended spells of martial law after 1971. Since India is itself undergoing some of the same stresses that led to military rule in both of these states, it is important to note the similarities and differences between them, not only for the sake of understanding India, but because its neighbors look to India as a model.

-- Certain recent events have had a direct and dramatic impact upon the military, and may have far reaching consequences. It is hard to say which of these is most significant: the murder of Mrs. Gandhi, the mutiny of Sikh soldiers, the development of a Khalistan movement, direct military rule in the Punjab, and the continuing arms race with Pakistan. A host of minor events and trends have taken their toll as well: the bypassing of paramilitary forces in quelling riots in Bombay, the dramatic increase in retired unemployed servicemen, irregularities in senior promotions, controversy over caste



recruitment to the army, and a protracted struggle by all three armed services to improve the quality and quantity of their weapons in order to implement new, offensive military doctrines

While this chapter will touch upon most of these events and problems, our central theme and perspective will remain that of the military itself. In the final analysis, it is the restraint of the armed forces that allows civilian control, pluralist politics, and democratic civil liberties to survive, if not thrive, in India. Our central concern is less how the military defends the Indian state from internal and external threats than those mechanisms, values, and procedures which have limited its political role, even as it has become socially, economically, and culturally more important.

We are -- with one exception -- not concerned with the social composition or caste structure of the larger military establishment, as this does not bear directly upon the political and constitutional role of the armed force. The important exception is the reduced recruitment of Sikhs, a process which became a Sikh grievance and a matter of special concern to some Sikh officers.

Finally, because of India's special qualities, certain comparative insights may be useful. India is a democratic, poor, federal system, it is South Asian pluralist, and multi-lingual, it shares in the British imperial and colonial traditions, it is surrounded by powerful and sometimes hostile neighbors, as well as weak and dependent ones, it could easily acquire a nuclear weapons capability and is also, in places, economically and technologically advanced. The role that its military plays is not exactly comparable to any other state, but there are important structural, ideological, economic, and strategic points in common with Pakistan, the U S , Bangladesh, China, Israel, and others. Pakistan has a similar army, but different political context, Israel has a

similar political system, but a different kind of army, China is the right size and economic level, but differs in ideology and political structure. We shall be attentive to comparisons throughout this chapter not only for purposes of explication, but because of the special achievements of India's civil-military structure.



## II The Indian Officer Corps A Group Biography

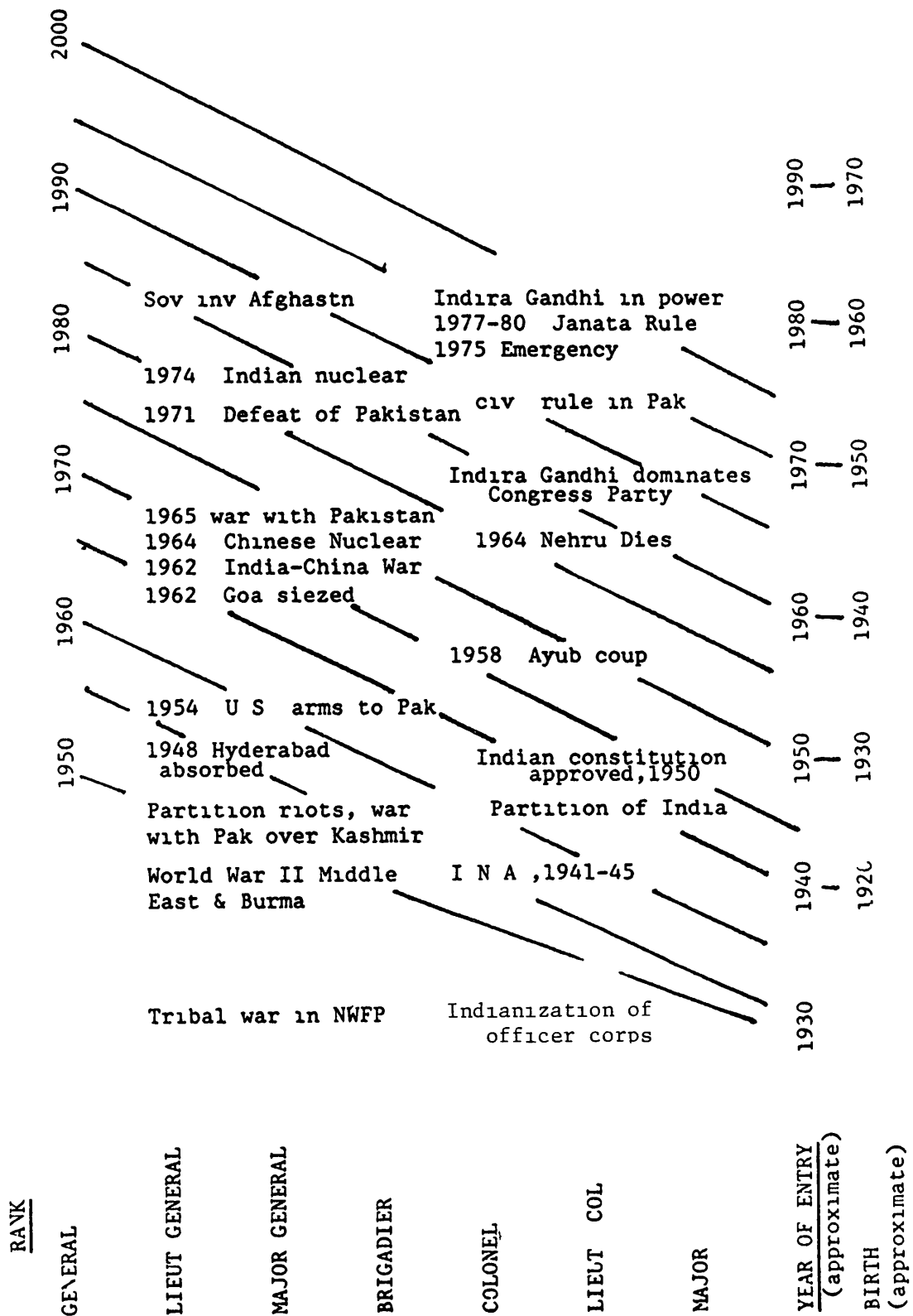
Since the future political role of the military is ultimately dependent upon the restraint (or intervention) of the officer corps, it is vital that we describe that officer corps. This task is simplified by the fact that the officer corps is itself a formal bureaucracy, and thus slow to change. Its members have written extensively about the social, bureaucratic, and even political problems they face. We can also draw inferences about the impact of particular major events or trends, basing our analysis upon known consequences in other military establishments. It is thus possible to treat the Indian military as a kind of extended, historical family, in which succeeding generations undergo somewhat different experiences while sharing certain key familial characteristics. Some of these critical historic events are summarized in Figure 1.

### The British Legacy[4]

The present Indian military establishment is led entirely by officers recruited and trained in independent India. The bulk of them entered after 1962-3, when the army was almost tripled in size. Today the army itself has about 35,000 officers. They share a number of values and beliefs inherited from their British forerunners. Their perspective is all-Indian, and they view affairs in a national or even subcontinental context, not from a regional perspective. They also inherit the view that "politics" (in the partisan sense) is to be kept out of the mess. They feel that the army is the only effective force standing between chaos and order -- their frequent involvement in "aid to the civil power" operations, whether in the form of disaster relief or riot

## POLITICAL EVENTS

## FIGURE 1. MILITARY GENERATIONS IN INDIA





control regularly drives this lesson home -- as it did for their British predecessors. But this involvement also led to another lesson. India is so vast and disorderly a country that the army would find it difficult to manage it. The British taught, and the Indians learned that the armed forces must remain above politics, if possible, lest it be torn apart by sectarian differences. Yet this belief provides a motive for intervention when the military (as they did in Pakistan and Bangladesh) come to believe that their own organization is threatened by political rot.

#### The Post-War Army

The Indian army managed the transition from colonial instrument to nationalist force with amazing ease. Nehru and Patel, as well as the British, all agreed that any abrupt change in the structure of the army, its ideology, or even its recruitment pattern would lead to political instability. They were assisted in the process of "democratizing" the Indian army by two important facts, first, the serving Indian officers were all very young -- only a few had reached brigadier rank -- and posed no threat to the politicians. Second, the ideologues who wanted to create a truly nationalist force could not press their case while the army was barely able to meet its security obligations during Partition, in Kashmir, and then in Junagadh and Hyderabad. These internal "liberation" wars confirmed the nationalist, if not yet democratic pedigree of the Indian armed forces.

Shortly afterwards, the officer corps underwent a transformation, changing the class structure of the military. Even though the Punjab continued to dominate the officer corps (today Sikhs still constitute about 22% of the officers), the army became less attractive to India's upper classes. Pay fell

behind inflation, service conditions were increasingly difficult (especially after 1962), the formal status of the armed forces was sharply reduced, and military policy was subordinated to a foreign policy which placed more emphasis on diplomacy than force [5]

Bright young Indians from "good" families have stayed away from the military, especially the army for years. At the elite private schools the first preference for graduates (after a college education) has become foreign firms and then Indian private firms. In their place have come the sons of Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) and Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) [9]

This trend has eradicated the elitist character of the officer corps, especially in the army. More precisely, it will be one generation removed from the peasantry, as the largest single category of entrant into the NDA and IMA are sons of NCOs and JCOs, who have themselves spent several years of service as other ranks. Very senior officers openly describe the intellectual calibre of leadership material attracted to the armed forces (especially the army) as "intellectually mediocre" [6]

The decline in the formal status of the Indian Army officer has been fully documented in the military's own journals. An analysis by one of India's leading soldier-scholars, the then Brigadier S. K. Sinha, points out that every one of the 3,000 Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers is bound to become Commissioner or Collector in twenty years and achieve the statutory status of a major-general [7]. Compared with the pyramidal structure of the armed forces, the IAS and police are rectangular in shape. As an army officer will only be guaranteed of reaching lieutenant-colonel in twenty-four years, the IAS cadre, one tenth the size of the officer corps, had some fifty appointments (now, in



1986, one hundred) at secretary-level equitable with the army's sole general slot [8]

A follow-up study noted that the situation had actually worsened after the 1971 war when the Chiefs of the three service staffs were placed below the Comptroller and Auditor General and lieutenant generals were placed below the chief secretaries of states (even though one might be a corps commander with responsibility for the defense of half a dozen states) [9] Further, individual states can establish their own warrant of precedence for officers of the rank of brigadier and below, some created "ludicrous anomalies" In Tamilnadu, Bihar and Orissa a brigadier is now ranked above a deputy commissioner and IAS officers with less than 25 years of service, but is below such an officer in Rajasthan (in fact, he ranks below an officer with as little as nine years of service), and in Rajasthan, Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland, brigadiers are ranked below deputy commissioners

Similar disparities in pay and pension allowances and in difficult housing conditions have contributed to the decline in status of the military profession in India to the point where the subject has become a regular feature of the professional military literature Significantly, virtually no such complaints are heard from the navy or air force Thus the largest service is the one in greatest social decline, and the two armed services that are weakest within the government remain the most popular among the general educated elite of India

This military is neither elitist nor ideological, but is officered by average talent Officers are increasingly the product of the military culture itself, many having been taught entirely in cantonment schools, raised in the cantonment atmosphere, and obligated entirely to the military for their livelihood and enhanced status from cradle to funeral pyre But, the officer is

not isolated from his own society. The contemporary officer is keenly aware of the personal and institutional corruption which surrounds him, even among the political leadership of the state. Published reports indicate that this corruption has touched the military directly [10]. In particular, contact with the broader civilian society in the area of recruitment, and in purchases of stores and equipment are known for their "opportunity". Young officers who want to make money on the side gravitate to recruiting details, where bribes of several thousand rupees are not uncommon.

There is one important principle involved in this brush with corruption. A man who resists temptation from this direction, who resists pressures from family, caste or friends to bend the rules, and who tries to uphold the highest professional standards will feel doubly betrayed by the politician who uses him and his men for corrupt goals. He will also regard a threat to his service as a threat to himself, since he is unlikely to have any place to go after resignation. In brief, the military becomes increasingly sensitive to lateral pressures from a materialistic society and to pressures from above, when the officer corps is both professional and drawn from the lower middle class.

#### Future Generations

All available evidence indicates that the young officers now in the Indian army -- the colonels of the year 2000, and the generals of 2010 -- are very much like their predecessors [11]. The lure of private industry has reduced the status of all but few government-related jobs for the average Indian. Very few sons of commissioned officers join the army -- probably not more than 10%, according to one study, "today there is no such thing as martial tradition. Sons who automatically joined the old man's regiment are now plumping for 'civvy

street ^ The incentive is gone The so-called good families no longer consider the armed forces as a last resort for a not very intelligent offspring Even he goes to a firm "[12]

This lack of interest in the armed forces by the educated and upper class families of India is not without parallel in other countries, including Pakistan and the United States It is probably related to the decline in interest within the army in the fighting branches, which had traditionally attracted the best and the brightest Now there are severe shortfalls in officer volunteers for the infantry and artillery while branches such as the service and ordnance corps are oversubscribed [13]

Does this change in the social composition of the officer corps have political implications? In itself, probably not Those who fear the Indian army as the last bastion of an elite upper class need not worry Nor are there likely to be direct political consequences of this shift in social class The Pakistan Army underwent a similar transformation after World War II and remains politically active The U S military, also saw its social composition alter after World War I and transformed after World War II, but remains politically inert As we shall discuss below, any change in the political role of the Indian armed forces will depend more upon actions of the civilians than the armed forces and probably come about through other routes Nevertheless, military grievances over pay and status are substantial, and may be contributing factor to an increased role for the armed forces

### III The Combat Experiences of the Indian Military

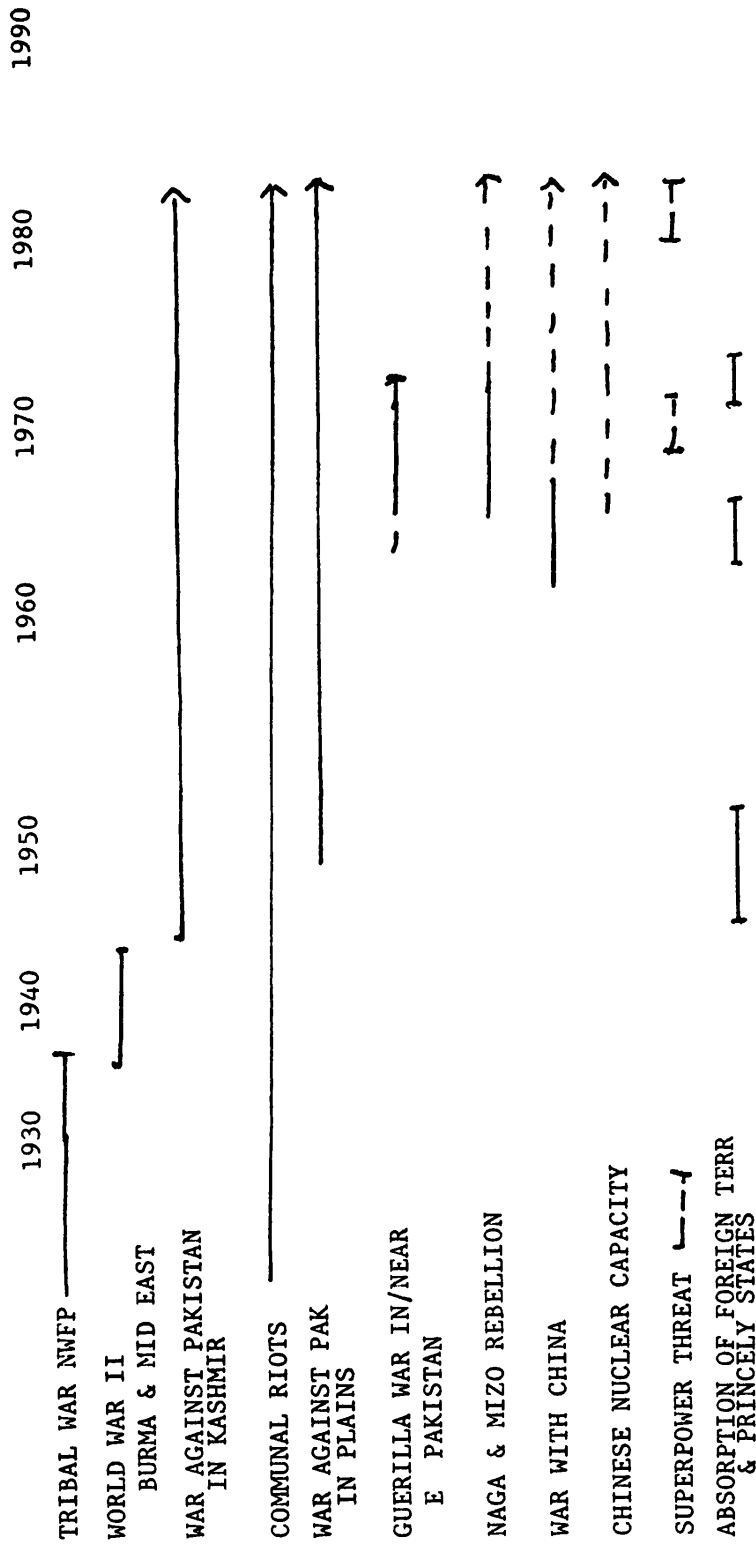
It is important to note the type of armed conflicts that the Indian military has engaged in, since this does have some bearing upon its political role. Figure 2 summarizes these conflicts. It shows that the military has been almost continuously active since 1947 at every level from police action to preparation for nuclear war. How has this shaped the relationship between India's armed forces and its democratic structure?

#### The Partition Riots and Internal Conflict

From 1947 onward the Indian military (especially the army) has been regularly involved in the suppression of communal violence and large-scale counter-insurgency action. The military's involvement in these operations is inherently paradoxical. On the one hand, it demonstrates the national character of the armed forces, the contribution the army makes to the unity and integrity of India. Yet, the army hates such operations. No army can train efficiently for conventional war and stand by for riot control. Not only does the latter disrupt training cycles and demand different kinds of tactics and doctrine, but conflict with Pakistan meant that the army could no longer be permanently quartered in and around India's major cities.

Therefore, in the 1950s and 1960s a number of important paramilitary forces were created to serve as a buffer between the army and domestic disorder that could not be contained by the increasingly corrupt and incompetent police. At first, these paramilitary forces were welcomed, and some observers thought that India had become coup-proofed. Indeed, during the critical months of the Emergency Indira Gandhi did not have to call upon the military at all, relying entirely upon state and central intelligence, police, and paramilitary.

FIGURE 2 WARS OF THE INDIAN MILITARY TYPE AND DURATION (Cohen)



----- = intermittent or potential

\_\_\_\_\_ = continuous or live



bureaucracies But this step was taken without adequate attention to the root cause of the problem of domestic disorder the growth of political corruption and the linkage between politicians and the state police forces Indeed, the police and paramilitary forces were themselves to become one of the chief causes of internal disorder [14]

The attitude of the Indian military towards the new paramilitary forces was decidedly mixed On the one hand there was universal agreement that such forces are necessary to insulate the military from direct involvement with communal, regional, religious, or other civil disorders On the other hand, the officers are jealous of these forces Their officers and men receive considerably better pay than the army, and often a status and authority which they do not deserve The military would like to control such forces, or be able to place their own officers and men in them on a temporary basis [15]

At its upper levels "aid to the civil power" blends into full-scale military operations designed to contain regional dissident movements From the mid-fifties onward, the army was called upon to deal with recalcitrant tribal groups who were seeking autonomy or independence The army has been continuously deployed in Nagaland and Mizoram, in a counter-insurgency role Some of the counter-insurgency literature that it has produced out of the Nagaland experience can stand with the best written on the subject [16]

The army has accepted close political supervision of its actions in Nagaland and Mizoram and understands the need for restraint The tribal struggles do not have the potential (as does Punjab or Kashmir) for rapid escalation and they serve the useful purpose of giving various units combat experience under controlled circumstances Yet there is a certain chafing with political control It is exacerbated when the army must work with police

officers of lesser experience, or with paramilitary forces over which it has limited or no control. In these and related operations the army regards itself as an extension of national policy, containing groups which would leave -- or destroy -- the Indian state. For many Nagas and Mizos, of course, the army is seen as an imperial occupation force, which from time to time has resorted to extremely brutal tactics. Most Indians are oblivious to the scope and operation of their own military in these states, although the problem has been raised by various international and Indian civil rights groups [17]

#### "A Communal Riot with Armor"

The three wars between India and Pakistan have had a special quality about them. In the words of one Indian general, they are more like "communal riots with armor," than wars between sovereign states. The identities of India (a secular state with a large Muslim minority) and Pakistan (an avowedly religious state) stand as a challenge to each other, and both are extremely sensitive to the domestic politics of the other, especially in communal matters.

The Indian armed forces have built up considerable experience and doctrine from their wars with Pakistan. Until recently, this doctrine was passive and reactive, and also reflected a lack of civilian interest in offensive strategies [18]. Nehru, of course, was wary of the military and tried to keep it as small as possible as long as possible -- his reaction to the expansion of Pakistan's armed forces was quite restrained compared with recent subcontinental arms "racing" [19]. Shastri and Indira Gandhi were also reluctant to contemplate offensive strategies. Pakistan was also too formidable a foe to attack, especially since India had a two-front military problem after 1962 and no

civilian (or military) official willing to divert substantial resources from developmental projects to the military

Thus, India has never faced a situation against its main enemy, Pakistan, where there was a sharp divergence between civilian and military approaches to strategy. Nor, with one exception, has military action been viewed from an ideological perspective. The exception -- and it is only partial -- was the invasion of East Pakistan, resulting in the creation of a temporarily democratic Bangladesh. At the time the army was widely praised as having liberated Bangladeshis from military tyranny and furthering the cause of democracy, this euphoria was short-lived and there is a general recognition that military power is not an effective instrument in creating or even supporting regional democracies, as much as India would prefer its neighbors to have compatible political systems.

#### Interventions Chinese and Soviet

India's armed forces have also had to cope with external interventions into South Asia by China and the Soviet Union. Each influenced the military's thinking in important ways.

The 1962 war and its aftermath showed that the Indian army was professional enough to reconstruct itself after a shattering military and moral defeat [20]. It had the full support of the political community and some American, British and Soviet assistance, but basically the post-1962 expansion and reform was an internal military achievement. This successful effort did not obscure two vital lessons drawn by most officers.

First the 1962 performance of the officer corps itself ranged from mediocre to incompetent, with a very few brave (and largely posthumous) exceptions.

Second, was that the military as a whole had been betrayed by the politicians, including Nehru and Krishna Menon. This lesson was applied in 1965 when the then COAS, J N Chaudhuri, asked for and was granted operational freedom, a situation exactly opposite that of 1962, when Nehru, Menon, and senior intelligence officers and civil servants controlled the tiniest movement of army units. The '65 pattern was followed in modified form in 1971. Once permission to attack was given the army was left entirely on its own in the east until the Pakistan Army surrendered. This time the army played a greater role in the peacemaking process and insisted that some territories taken from Pakistan not be returned for tactical military reasons.

An intervention of current consequence is the Russian occupation of Afghanistan [21]. The military regard this as an unmitigated disaster from two perspectives. It has enabled Pakistan to acquire new weapons, and it has raised an entirely new set of strategic problems. Unlike 1971, when East Pakistan was virtually isolated from all important external contacts, a war with Pakistan would not mean a free ride for the Indian army. The Soviet Union, as a presence in South Asia, is both a potential collaborator and a rival to India for the role of dominant South Asian power.

### Nuclear War

Finally, the Indian military has at least a theoretical interest in nuclear war. The subject was included in the army's Staff College syllabus as early as the mid-fifties, but only when an Indian weapon became a distinct possibility (by the late sixties) did the army take the bomb seriously [22]. From an army perspective, there is some fear that the budget for conventional weapons would be cut to supplant a nuclear weapon and its delivery systems. Army officers

have also raised the problem of control. Not only are they concerned that another service might assume the responsibility for nuclear weapons, but this would further strain inter-service cooperation.

While one can find critics of an Indian nuclear weapon in the military, most officers subscribe to the "option" strategy, and there has been a movement towards rather than away from nuclear acquisition. The military, after wishing that the issue would go away, have positioned themselves so that while they cannot be accused of pressuring the government to go nuclear, they will be the first to stake a claim for control over nuclear weapons once the decision is reached [23].

To summarize, the Indian military has undergone a complete transformation from being an imperial auxiliary, lacking any significant modern weapons, to something approximating a balanced military force possessing nearly all modern arms. It has grown from a hundred thousand to a million men yet it retains both its professional competence and its distance from an active political role. It would seem, however, that the key to the latter is not to be found in the former. During the same period the Pakistan army also evolved into a modern fighting force while simultaneously placing itself at the center of Pakistani politics. This suggests that we shift our focus from the military's own institutions and experiences to the institutional and social means by which this large and powerful machine is guided.



#### IV The Armed Forces and the Policy Process

The Indian armed forces play a remarkably small role in the shaping of security and defense-related policies, and virtually no role in the shaping of policies outside this area. Indeed, probably no military of equivalent importance or size has less influence. This situation was not inherited from the British, but was assembled, piece by piece, over the years, and is now enshrined in various constitutional and bureaucratic structures. We will examine these below, and then discuss vulnerable points in Section V.

##### Formal Structures

As India achieved independence in 1947, a number of structural and constitutional arrangements were instituted, which had the net effect of ensuring that decisive military power would remain in the hands of the Union government, and that within that government the armed forces would be strictly subordinate to civilian political and administrative control [24].

The initial step involved removing the Commander-in-Chief, Indian army, from the Governor General's Executive Council, when the interim government was formed in September, 1947. He was replaced by a civilian defense member (Sardar Baldev Singh). A Defense Member's committee was created, and had the commander-in-chief, the defense secretary, and the financial advisor as members. After August 15, 1947, this was transformed into the Defense Minister's Committee, and the heads of the air force and the navy joined it. The army C-in-C then became theoretically equal to the heads of the other, much smaller and weaker services (In 1955 the heads of all three services were renamed as chiefs of their respective staffs, further reducing their status).

The Indian Constitution of 1950 vests the "supreme command of the defense forces of the union" in the President of India, but the President is obligated to be "regulated by law," and de facto control over the government apparatus was vested in the Prime Minister. Article 74 (1) of the Constitution states that "There shall be a Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister as head to aid and advise the President in the exercise of his functions." Conventions, established over the years, and later constitutional changes, have ensured that "aid and advice" is authoritative, and no President has attempted to exercise independent command over the armed forces.

Indian defense policy has usually been formulated at the highest level by a subcommittee of the cabinet, now the Political Affairs Committee. The chiefs of staff of the armed services are not members, but may be invited to sit in on its meetings. They are members of the Defense Minister's Committee, and have their own interservice committee, the Chiefs of Staff Committee. This committee is chaired by the service chief with the longest tenure on the committee, ensuring that the dominant service, the army, will not automatically chair this committee. "Collectively, the Chiefs of Staff Committee is the highest professional advisor to the government on defense matters "[25]

While civilian defense officials claim that this complicated system of committees ensures authoritative political guidance to the military and sound military advice to the politicians,[26] many in the military would disagree. They have written that because of the increase in the ministerial membership of the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs, the actual participation of the service chiefs at the highest level of decision making has become more diffuse, and there is a tendency not to invite the service chiefs even when defense matters are discussed [27]. Instead, the services have been represented by the

Defense Secretary, further weakening their access to what is, on paper, the final decision-making authority on defense matters

### Bureaucratic and Political Control

The Indian military are not only legally circumscribed, but have been bureaucratically and politically contained by the powerful Ministry of Defense. The Ministry must approve all service-originated proposals, it determines all policy concerning the location and operation of defense industries -- including the choice of weapons that will be produced in these industries -- and it is responsible for all public information and policy statements pertaining to defense and security matters. The Ministry of Defense has no operational authority, but it also decides what is or is not a "policy" matter, and hence fit for ministry or cabinet level review.

The civilian officials of the Defense Ministry regard themselves as the pivot on which the defense policy process revolves. The ministry's class I cadre remains quite small, considering their responsibilities and influence. Generally, the civilians who fill these positions have only the most rudimentary military or defense background. Since their tenure is only five years, K Subrahmanyam notes that for their first two or three years they are still acquiring knowledge about an unfamiliar field, they are only in a position to contribute to policymaking during the last half of their tenure. Few have had extensive international experience. Typically, they are intensely aware of the internal political and social aspects of defense, not the role of defense policy as an instrument of foreign policy.

These shortcomings of civilian officials, coupled with their enormous veto power over what the generals propose, greatly irritates the military. One

retired officer characterized the civilian defense official as "one who can talk about and pronounce judgment upon the knottiest professional problem with nonprofessional competence but professional air "[28] For their part, senior civilian defense officials have noted the caution and timidity of the military, although some have indicated considerable improvement in the quality of senior military leaders in the past ten years

Over the years a variety of appointments have been made to the Defense portfolio, and these fall into two types. The first have been politically weak but administratively competent individuals, who have "managed" the military and the Ministry of Defense. With one exception, Mrs. Gandhi's appointments were in this category. This exception was Bansi Lal, who reportedly abused his authority and angered the military. After returning to power in 1980 Mrs. Gandhi reverted to her earlier pattern by appointing first R. Venkataraman and then S. B. Chawan to the Defense portfolio.

Earlier, more activist ministers had been appointed by Nehru (Krishna Menon and Y. B. Chawan) and during the Janata period (Jagjivan Ram). Menon and Ram, in particular, involved themselves in recruitment, training, and promotion practices with mixed reactions from the armed services. Rajiv Gandhi, at first, placed a reliable but powerless figure (P. V. Narasimha Rao) in the Defense Ministry, but by mid-1985 had assumed the portfolio himself, and made a trusted friend and associate (Arun Singh) Minister of State Defense Production -- perhaps the de facto Defense Minister. This step was followed by a rush of decisions concerning foreign weapons purchases, and the reorganization of the armed services.

### The Chiefs' Controversy

The Indian military have accepted, but not enjoyed, their ever-lessening influence at the higher levels of the policy process. They are faced with a dilemma as long as they retain active command over their respective services civilian officials are reluctant to increase their influence within the central decision making process. The Indian chiefs have enormous operational authority, especially during wartime, but only advisory power at the center. There they are treated as formal equals, despite the obviously greater operational authority of the army COAS, and kept well away from the ultimate level of decision-making.

Naturally, the armed services -- especially the army -- would like to change this arrangement, and this issue lies at the heart of the long-standing debate over the role of the chiefs. Should there be a fourth chief, as in the U S and U K ? If so, who should it be? The suggestion of a fourth chief goes back at least to 1949, and was raised again in the 1960s by General J N Chaudhuri and more recently (in 1982) by another COAS, General Krishna Rao [29]

The army is the natural advocate of an expanded joint chiefs system along the lines of the British Chief of Defense Staff system or the U S Joint Chiefs. In virtually every Western country (they argue) such a system exists for coordinating military operations during wartime, and providing coordinated and combined advice to civilians. The Indian system has been notorious for the lack of both. During 1965 and 1971 there was very little inter-service coordination (in 1962 the navy and air force were not involved in the fighting in any significant way). P C Lal, the then Air Marshal, claims that Chaudhuri created the problem in 1965 by his unilateral determination of army strategy and



failure to consult with the other two services, Lal himself determined what the IAF strategy targeting would be in 1971, apparently without reference to army wishes. Other accounts indicate that the successful combined operations against Karachi were due more to good luck and fortunate timing than integrated military planning.

Somewhat disingenuously, the army advocates of a CDS system claim that the Chief need not be from the army, but might be an air force or navy man. Whoever it was would presumably have to leave his own service parochialism behind.

The CDS system is strongly opposed by most navy and air force officers and a good number of politicians and the civilian bureaucracy. The navy and the IAF naturally feel that they would never get to hold the chairmanship. Further, since the Indian military fights on or near its own borders, a CDS system is unnecessary since proper coordination could take place within the current system -- especially if the army would cooperate.

The political arguments against the CDS system are not as openly voiced, but in the current situation are powerful and final. First, there is the long-standing civilian suspicion of men in uniform, and a deep-seated belief (held by Nehru and, apparently, Mrs. Gandhi) that the military remain a potential trouble spot for Indian democracy. Creating a fourth chief would mean creating a fourth general, or even an officer of field marshal rank, without good cause. More to the point, it runs counter to the divide and rule strategy employed by Nehru, Shastri, and Indira Gandhi, implemented by the civilian bureaucrats, and directed against the armed forces -- in particular, the army [30]. In India, the navy and the air force present no credible political threat, but the army might. The present arrangement reduces the army chief to no more than equal (and less than equal, when he does not chair the Joint Chiefs

committee) Would changing this system actually improve the quality of military advice (ask those civilians who oppose change) when the military at best are not terribly inventive? Reshuffling the chief's system -- they argue -- would not improve military decision making, but it might enhance the political power of the military

An additional word is in order on the selection of the chiefs particularly the COAS This has two dimensions the failure of a Sikh to become chief of the army staff (even though the army's officer corps is about 18/ Sikh), and the apparent manipulation of appointments to ensure that the COAS would be an officer who was politically acceptable to the government We shall discuss the problem of the Sikhs when looking at the Punjab crisis, although it should be noted that two Sikhs have been Chiefs of the Air Staff

When considering promotions to the COAS position, the first step is the preparation by the Defense Ministry bureaucracy of a statement of qualifications and experience of the five regional commanders northern, southern, eastern, western and central, plus the vice chief of staff -- all lieutenant generals The six constitute a panel from which the COAS is selected by a cabinet subcommittee for appointments presided over by the Prime Minister

Until recently, the principle of seniority has been followed in promoting the COAS from this group (promotions at earlier levels are made largely by the military itself) There had earlier been great controversy when Lieut Gen Harbaksh Singh and Lieut Gen P S Bhagat, two outstanding officers, were allowed to retire because they barely lacked seniority

The first overt violation of the seniority principle came on June 1, 1975, barely a month before the imposition of the Emergency, when Lieut Gen T N Raina was made COAS, jumping over at least one other officer with greater

seniority The second violation occurred in May, 1983, in an even more controversial appointment [31] One of India's most brilliant soldiers, Lieut -Gen S K Sinha, was superseded by Lieut -Gen A S Vaidya, even though Sinha was Vice-Chief of the Army Staff, and thought to be in line to become the new chief Vaidya was thought to have seriously compromised himself with public criticism of the ruling CPM government in Tripura and praise for the election alliance between Congress (I) and another party He was attacked in the press by the CPM party leadership as having given "political statements", and the defense public relations service had to issue a statement to the effect that the Indian army "continues to remain apolitical in its best tradition "[32] Sinha responded to his supersession by turning in his resignation Several newspapers reprinted some of his perceptive writings on the problems of civil-military relations in India He has since unsuccessfully entered politics and received widespread support from a group of journalists and retired officers who regard him as one of the best officers ever produced by the Indian Army

These two incidents occurred under Mrs Gandhi, and it is widely believed that she was responsible for the supersessions Her defenders argued that the principle of seniority was not inviolable, although they had earlier used it to justify the retirement of otherwise very well qualified generals These episodes fit into the broader pattern of her style of governance, in which appointments were made -- and unmade -- as a matter of convenience and later justified The practice disturbed the military, and tended to encourage senior officers to curry favors from the political leadership, further dividing them The generals could accept a system in which promotion was based on a principle of merit, or one based upon strict seniority, but a system in which promotions

are made in order to keep the military divided is likely to have exactly the opposite effect in the long run

While the military's formal role in the higher decision-making system has declined over the years, there has been a continuation of military influence at other levels. Under Mrs Gandhi, retired senior officers were appointed as governors, headed various defense production and research facilities, and served on various public commissions and agencies. In some cases active duty officers have received non-military appointments to such bodies. One recent (1985) Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal M L Khatre, had been head of the giant manufacturing and research complex, Hindustan Aeronautics, Ltd. Quite often, senior officers are immediately appointed to such choice positions immediately upon retirement (Gen K V Krishna Rao was made Governor of the militarily sensitive states of Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura in June, 1984).

There is considerable indirect evidence to show that these government-controlled appointments are not given to recalcitrant officers, but to those who have cooperated with the government during their tenure in the military. As the social status of the armed forces continues to decline, it will be easier for the government to use post-service employment as a reward to pliable officers, especially if these officers have no other career or income to fall back on.

This strategy may be effective in the short run, but it does risk embittering those officers who have not "cooperated", and who feel that their colleagues have sold out the profession for personal advancement.

## V Civil-Military Relations Subordination or Equality?

In a reasonably well developed political system such as India's, with a long tradition of civilian dominance over the military, any change in the relationship between the two will be incremental, not dramatic. Despite this, there is a long tradition of alarmist writing about the imminent take-over of the military in India. This has been a popular subject for journalists who have been predicting the increased intervention of the army for years [33]

Scholarly analyses have usually been more restrained. Their picture of a large, diverse, sprawling military establishment, divided into three services, numerous commands within each service, all directed by political and bureaucratic elites fully aware of the need to maintain civilian authority legitimacy, and control is essentially accurate [34]. Interestingly, even the journalists have begun to subscribe to this view, and predictions of military take-over have been replaced by relatively balanced analysis. The Indian army is now held up as an exception to the dismal parade of coup and counter-coup [35]

Although I am one of those who have made a strong case for regarding India as an exception to the widespread pattern of military intervention, optimism about the political role of the Indian military is premature, and a number of the barriers to military intervention have been removed or weakened. Others remain, but the circumstances under which they, too, might crumble are not difficult to imagine.

Military intervention in politics will in part be a function of the size of the state and the development of the political system. Large countries are difficult to govern from the center, although if regional institutions are

relatively underdeveloped, even a large country may in some ways be easier to steer from the center than small ones. Intervention will also be influenced by the prevalent form of civilian control -- whether the military are ruled because they are different than civilians or just like them. Armies the size and complexity of India's do not intervene lightly, but do so because of overwhelming organizational pressures and political compulsions. Above all, they will intervene to protect their own institutional integrity, or to protect or restore a political order which in turn shields them, or to remove one which they regard as detrimental to national interests.

The Indian army is a long way from overt intervention but there have been many signals that some of the barriers to intervention -- or increased military influence -- have disappeared. The most important such barrier -- the legitimacy, integrity, and competence of the central political system -- has badly eroded in the past fifteen years. This erosion includes the decline of the Congress party (except as a vehicle for Indira Gandhi's personal rule) and the simultaneous failure of opposition parties to demonstrate their ability to govern effectively, fairly, and without serious corruption. For the professional soldier there was not much choice between the capricious Janata government and the willful combination of Bansi Lal and Sanjay Gandhi. Service resentment over political incompetence -- especially when that incompetence affects the conduct of war or the readiness of the military to fight a war, runs deep. Some day it may be the force which propels the military into politics. Nor are the armed forces, especially the army, passive observers of the deterioration and increasing violence and lawlessness of Indian politics. They have begun to play a direct role in the political system through the rear entrance called "aid to the civil power."



From Aid to the Civil to Military-Civilian Partnership?

One of the central myths of the Indian political system is that the Indian military is "apolitical " This is true only insofar as the armed forces do not rule India, and the decision-making process is dominated by civilians It is also true that the folklore of the mess says that politics and the military profession do not mix, and that young officers are taught that the Indian military must remain apolitical However, it is not true in the sense that the military know nothing about politics, or that they do not act in support of political objectives, or that they do not themselves directly govern more and more of India

Most officers, especially army commanders, are very well informed about domestic politics, let alone broader strategic and foreign policy issues Every Indian district is in an area command, and many cities are part of or adjacent to cantonments or bases In each of these cases the area commander has, as part of his professional duties, a complete knowledge of local politics He will be able to recite with precision the factions, interests, and objectives of each local political, religious, or other interest group In this he is supported by the military's own intelligence services and close liaison with police and civilian bureaucracies

This knowledge is important should the military be called upon "in aid of the civil power " After independence it was recognized that "aid to the civil" could be damaging to the preparedness of the armed forces The example of Pakistan (where the army ultimately intervened in central politics after having been repeatedly called out to prop up civilian authority) was also noted These two considerations led to the creation of a massive structure of paramilitary

forces, which were to serve as a buffer between the regular armed forces and the rough and tumble of domestic disorder

Despite these paramilitary forces -- and in a few cases because of them -- the direct intervention of the armed forces in state and local matters has steadily increased in the past few years. Most of these interventions have been limited, and were quick "in and out" operations. In this sense, the military have acted in support of the political structure, providing ultimate force in situations where political solutions had failed and where the police could not cope.

The increase in such interventions has been dramatic. During 1951-70 the army was called in to suppress domestic violence on approximately 476 occasions [36]. By contrast, the figures for the eighteen month period, June 1979-December, 1980 saw sixty-four instances of army assistance to civil authorities. A list of typical army interventions is presented in Table 1, Table 2 lists disturbances in these paramilitary and other security forces themselves.

These data suggest that the police and paramilitary forces within India are themselves a security problem for the army. The literature on the subject indicates deep army concern about the failings of these forces, beginning in 1973, when the Uttar Pradesh Armed Constabulary took up arms against the government in a labor dispute [37]. This concern is justified, since the number of and size of these paramilitary forces is increasing faster than their reliability and efficiency.

Table 1 (Cohen)

Indian Army Deployments in Aid-to-Civil, 1973-84

Year	Where Deployed	Reason	Dates	Approximate Duration
1973	Assam Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh Arunachal Pradesh Imphal, Manipur Nasik, Maharashtra	language riots police unrest tribal violence riots election violence	13 Apr-17 May 21 May-13 Jun 13-18 Jun 13-21 Sep 23-24 Apr	1 month 3 weeks 1 week 1 week 2 days
1974	Baroda, Gujarat  Ahmedabad, Gujarat Dhanbad & Ranchi, Bihar Palampur, Himachal Pradesh Patna, Bihar all India West Bengal (4 districts)	communal unrest  food riots communal violence ? student riots national rail strike riots	10-14 Jan, 25-26 Feb 28 Jan-16 Feb 20 Mar-2 Apr 25-26 Apr 18-26 Mar 7-20 May 27 Aug-5 Sep	1 week  3 weeks 2 weeks 2 days 1 week 3 weeks 2 weeks
1975	all Indian port cities Delhi Cooch Behar, West Bengal	docker's strike communal riots rural unrest	? Jan ? Feb 9-17 Feb	1 week? 1 week? 1 week
1976	Prime Minister Gandhi declares a state of national emergency called out in aid-to-civil			The Army is not
1977-79	No reliable information available *			
1980	Assam  Tripura** Meghalaya** Manipur** Nagaland** Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Delhi Jammu & Kashmir Tamil Nadu Bihar Himachal Pradesh	"antiforeigner" stir, election violence tribal violence tribal insurgency student/tribal unrest tribal violence communal violence (Moradabad) ? ? CISF strike ?	Feb  7 Jun-14 Nov "frequently" 17 Apr-17 May 23-30 Jul & 15 Nov Aug-Sep  ? ? ? Oct ?	continuous 6 months continuous 1 month continuous 2 months  ? ? 1 week ? ?
1981	Assam Gujarat	"antiforeigner" stir antireservation stir	continuous 1 Feb-2 May	1 year 3 months

Table 1, contd (Cohen)

Year	Where Deployed	Reason	Dates	Approximate Duration
1982	Assam Arunachal Pradesh Goa Baroda, Gujarat Kerala Maharashtra Mizoram** Nagaland**	"antiforeigner" stir student/tribal unrest communal disturbances communal disturbances communal disturbances Bombay police strike election violence election violence	continuous 17 Jul-21 Aug 2-7 Nov 28 Oct-5 Nov 30 Dec-12 Jan 83 8 Aug-9 Sep May & Dec 7 Oct	1 year 4 weeks 5 days 2 weeks 4 days 1 month 4 days? 2 days?
1983	No known Army deployments other than counterinsurgency operations in the north-eastern states and continuous peacekeeping duties in Assam Army put on alert in Punjab, Chandigarh, and Haryana			
1984	Maharashtra (Bombay, Bhiwandi, Thane, and adjoining suburbs)	communal riots	May-June	4 weeks
	Punjab, Chandigarh (limited deployments in adjoining areas of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Delhi, and Kashmir)	Sikh terrorist campaign centered in Amritsar, Army mutinies	5 Jun-present	ongoing
	Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh	Hindu-Muslim riots, political demonstrations	9 Sep-present	ongoing

\*Ministry of Defence Annual Reports do not mention any Army involvement with domestic peacekeeping chores during the Janata years in power. The Reports only highlight Army aid-to-civil in cases of natural disasters.

\*\*Regular Army troops are stationed and on alert in Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura on a continuous basis. The Reports ordinarily refer to Army operations in these states under a separate heading dealing with "counterinsurgency operations."

Table 2 (Cohen)

Incidents of Unrest Within Peacekeeping Forces, 1978-84

Date	Location	Immediate Cause of Unrest	Resolution
Oct 78	Tamil Nadu	CRPF strike, state police unwilling to move against strikers	2 battalions of BSF sent in to crush the strike
May 79	Gujarat	police strike	Army called in to restore order, strikers fired on, 5,000 arrested
Jun-Oct 79	Bhubaneswar, Puri, Trivandrum, Cuttack, Neemuch, Thumba, Cochin, Madras, Port Blair, Delhi, Bokaro	wildcat strikes by CRPF, CISF, and RPF units	Army and BSF dispatched to disarm strikers, 24 CISF strikers and 3 Army <u>jawans</u> killed at Bokaro, 3 CRPF mutineers killed in Delhi
Oct 79	Tamil Nadu	police strike	BSF and CRPF units dispatched, 3,000 policemen detained
Nov 79	Bombay (Maharashtra)	abortive police strike	BSF and CRPF personnel quell the Congress-supported strike
Oct 80	industrial locations in Bihar and West Bengal	CISF strike leads to clashes with police	Army dispatched to disarm CISF mutineers
Jan-Feb 81	Gujarat	police discredited during caste reservation protests	Army sent in to fill police vacuum and restore order
Aug 82	Bombay (Maharashtra)	police strike	Army sent in to restore the peace
Jun 84	Army barracks in Bihar, Maharashtra, Tripura, and Rajasthan	uncoordinated mutiny by over 1,500 Sikh conscripts in the aftermath of Army actions at the Golden Temple of Amritsar	loyal Army units capture the mutineers, Army discipline restored

The army's support of political authority in these aid to the civil operations has led into actual military rule in more than one state. The legal basis for enhanced army responsibility varies, but a number of ordinances, promulgated under the President's emergency powers, are now in place

-- the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (1956, subsequently amended) whereby the union government declares a state or district a "disturbed area." In areas where the declaration comes into force, army and paramilitary commanders are given authority to arrest suspects, conduct searches, and use lethal force without regard to the authority of the District Magistrate (who ordinarily supervises aid to the civil operations)

-- the National Security Act (1980) authorizes security forces to arrest and detain suspects for up to six months without a warrant. Although there are provisions for judicial review, the intent of the legislation is to give the armed forces a relatively free hand in dealing with agitators, terrorists, and rioters. Many provisions of this act are identical to those of the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) which was the legal basis for the Emergency of 1975-77

-- the Essential Services Maintenance Act allows army troops to replace striking workers in "vital" industries such as oil production and rail transport. The industries are effectively taken over by the army pending settlement of the dispute. Strikers can be subject to arrest under provisions of the National Security Act

-- the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (1967) allows the center to ban subversive organizations. This currently applies to rebellious Sikh organizations in the Punjab and several insurgent groups in the northeast

-- the Terrorist Affected Areas (Special Courts) Ordinance (1984) was designed

to help the army root out Sikh terrorists in the Punjab [38] This provides for secret tribunals to try terrorists and is based upon the presumption of guilt -- the accused must prove himself or herself innocent It also confers special powers upon the security forces

This stunning array of legislation and ordinance has given the military and paramilitary forces considerable power in many affected areas of Assam, Punjab, Kashmir and other states For millions of Indians the effective government has been the local area or sub-area commander, in some areas the system was no more protective of civil liberties than the recent martial law in Pakistan, where civil courts and religious courts function parallel to the martial law system and appeals from decisions by the latter have been frequent and successful As an informed Pakistani military writer has noted of the 1982-3 situation in Assam "Such a state of affairs is certainly not martial law but it may well contain all its normal concomitants, such as a suspension of civil liberties, imposition of press censorship, search and arrest without warrants and enforcement of curfew order in sensitive and badly affected areas " By itself, such involvement may be necessary and desirable, but the same commentator notes that "the military's repeated deployment in situations of extreme civil disorder could, on the one hand, induce the civil authority to lean more and more upon it, and, on the other, give the military establishment the sugary foretaste of power," as it did in both Pakistan and Bangladesh [39]

Civilian Control From "Objective" to "Subjective"?

Samuel Huntington suggests that civilian control over the military ultimately takes one of two forms "Objective" control is exercised by a legitimate civilian elite which respects and encourages the differences between it and the military professionals The latter are devoted to their profession and maintain a conservative, restricted ethic By contrast, "subjective" control is brought about through the merger of civilian and military values the armed forces are controlled because they share dominant civilian values and their distinctiveness is blurred

India has been undergoing a transition from objective to subjective control for a number of years At first, the gap between civilian and political elites was very large, and there were important social and class differences between the two However, the military are now recruited from the same social classes as the political and administrative leadership, and are in some ways more representative of the country Increasingly, the military are called upon to assume tasks they would have rejected thirty years ago Further, they are also called upon to voice the values and attitudes which are held by politicians -- they have been asked to become "committed" in the same way that the civil service has asked to identify itself with the values and aspirations of Mrs Gandhi and the Congress Party [40]

At the same time, some politicians, most notably Mrs Gandhi, have encouraged military-like values and attitudes, a form of civilian militarism [41] Unlike her father, Mrs Gandhi cultivated the legend of Subhas Chandra Bose and the secular, neo-totalitarian, egalitarian, militarism of the Indian National army



Although the comparison may not be exact, some of Mrs Gandhi's appeal would seem to be due to the similarities rather than the differences between herself and Bose. She is certainly a secularist and professes faith in democracy, although perhaps democracy of a special variety. Her speeches are dominated by references to the need for discipline and order. There is no doubt that she believes that internal and external enemies require continual vigilance, militancy, and preparedness. In the face of such enemies, even the enemy poverty, civil liberties are expendable. [42]

This appeal proved to be very popular, and it will be important to see whether any other national politician attempts to exploit the theme of militancy and militarism. It certainly does find resonance in certain regions of India, especially those with strong, local, martial traditions.

Similarly, it will be important to see whether the military are again called upon to make statements in support of specific political parties. It only takes a few such statements to have a great impact upon the entire military establishment and the political community, for if the military give the impression that they have even implicitly thrown their support to one or another political leader, they will be rapidly cultivated by all politicians.

Several astute observers have addressed this development Romesh Thapar has observed that India's new breed of officer, drawn from the middle classes of the Subcontinent, will invariably come to reflect the varied emotions of that Subcontinent, "making politics very much a part of the culture of the Indian military establishment, even though the same distance still continues to be maintained between it and the politicians "[43] He places blame for this on the political community and offers several remedies, including the revision of the higher defense decision-making process, clipping the power of the "ill-informed IAS network," reprofessionalism of the Indian army Otherwise, "India will find itself with a million-man army that has lost its professionalism, that reflects the worst qualities of Indian life, and that has important parochial service interests to protect "

The military literature is replete with nostalgia for an era when the army kept to its narrow professional concerns, but I know of no senior officer who has resigned his commission on the grounds that the armed forces were being asked to undertake inappropriate tasks They have, perhaps, decided to bend under pressure As one of India's most literate retired officers has written,

Let's face it, whether the civil servant or the soldier likes it or not, the political system and its ideologies have now become part and parcel of his daily living and the environment in which he works Wrongly or rightly, they have been allowed to permeate into almost all facets of his professional and cultural life, and he can no

longer pretend to remain outside this system and yet be effective as he has managed to do so in the past [The services] will have to learn to live with the particular ideology and be "committed" to it without appearing to be political

Brigadier Grant, who has in the past, advocated an apolitical and neutral officer corps sadly concedes that "sympathizers" will do better than "neutrals "[44]

If the trend is to continue, then there is reason to be concerned about the future professional integrity of the Indian armed forces, especially the army There is already a functional differentiation between officers who pursue strictly professional goals and those who take advantage of the increasing opportunities for corruption Those who seek money and corruption can find it -- particularly in the recruiting commands, in the service and supply corps, in the neo-martial law slots in the Punjab and elsewhere, and in any position which brings the officer into contact with civilian contractors and manufacturers As in Pakistan, part of the Indian army may become entangled in a corrupting civilian society and part will remain true to its professional ethic

However, increasing corruption within the armed forces is not likely to lessen the chances of a future military intervention The example of Pakistan[45] indicates that corruption and civilian meddling in internal military promotions and policies can be a contributing factor in the decision to intervene Indeed, the young Pakistani officer is taught, as is his Indian counterpart, that intervention is undesirable, and that the

military cannot effectively run the country without ruining itself, that their country is too large and too complex to be run from the center, and that military rule runs against the historic traditions of the armed forces. All this turns out to be irrelevant when the military face a situation of domestic political breakdown which ultimately (and sometimes, quite rapidly) affects the integrity of the military. For, above all, soldiers in both countries are taught that while they are the first line of defense against external enemies, they are also the last barrier to internal disarray. When the politicians, the bureaucrats, the police and the paramilitary have crumbled, only the armed forces stand between national integrity and national dissolution. Therefore, they tend to regard any incident which affects their own internal integrity as of transcendental importance. Pakistan underwent such an experience as a consequence of several ill-fated aid to the civil power operations in Bengal and Punjab in the 1950s. These convinced the military not only of their own supreme importance but of the threat to their integrity from civilian incompetence. We now turn to the tragic, but comparable events in the Punjab in 1984, which may turn out to be equal in their importance.

## VI The Sikh/Punjab Crisis and the Army

No single event in modern Indian history has so affected the armed forces as the Sikh/Punjab crisis of 1983-4. While the 1962 loss to China was humiliating, and revealed serious internal military problems, it led to a purge of incompetents and a major rebuilding effort. The army was stronger after the war than before it. The events of 1984 were quite different. The integrity of the armed forces was shaken at every level and affected all three services, the crisis also affects the strategic assumptions upon which the armed forces have based their war plan.

### Sikhs and the Indian Military

Sikhs have been a major component of the Indian army for over 130 years, or about five generations. They constituted about 25% of the Indian army during World War II, and have always been regarded as among the most effective of the army's classes. In the army they comprise two separate regiments. One is the Sikh Regiment, largely made up of Jats, the other is the Sikh Light Infantry, made up of Mazbhis and Ramdasias -- scheduled castes. One of Mrs. Gandhi's assassins, Beant Singh, was reportedly a Mazbhi Sikh who had been discharged from the army [46]. Sikhs are also found in several other infantry regiments which recruit on a mixed basis. They are present in large numbers in the Army Service Corps, the engineers, artillery, armor, and other specialized branches. They are also found in large numbers in the Air Force (perhaps a quarter of the IAF pilots are Sikhs), and there are substantial numbers in the Indian Navy [47].

After independence it was decided to freeze the number of "pure" one class regiments in the Indian army, but this did not substantially limit Sikh enrollment, which may have been about 20% of the other ranks, and perhaps a somewhat greater number of officers. However, because of a policy established in 1953, and further modified in 1963 by the Military Affairs committee of the cabinet (which stated that no state would have a dominant position in recruitment), there began a concerted effort to make the army more representative and to recruit from those states which had not traditionally provided many soldiers (Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, among others) [48]. In 1974 the Punjab was still providing over 15% of the army, it was assigned a quota (2-6%) commensurate with its population. This figure includes Hindus.

The recruitment issue was taken up by Sikh politicians, and comprised one of the demands of the Akali Dal's Anandpur Sahib Resolution in 1973. When the current President of India, Giani Zail Singh, was Chief Minister of Punjab (1972-77) he raised the issue of Sikh recruitment with Mrs Gandhi (then Prime Minister) and the Union Defense Minister (Jagjivan Ram). The Akalis and other Sikh politicians demanded that fitness and merit be the sole criteria for recruitment to the armed forces, retired Sikh officers have complained that in order to exclude Sikhs, recruiting officers follow a discriminatory policy towards qualified Sikh candidates.

By 1981 the Punjab was still sending four times its population percentage to the army, which led the then army chief, O P Malhotra, to remark that "I don't think that people of these states [referring to Punjab and Harayana, another traditional recruiting ground] have any reason to be dissatisfied "[49]. By this time the overall percentage of "traditional",

i e previously recruited classes, had dropped to 40%, and "all classes" comprised 60% of the army. The actual figures are not available [50]. It is not clear where Gurkhas are counted, although their numbers -- even though they are not Indian citizens -- have increased since the new policy went into effect.

Other regions of India have had exactly the same kind of controversy over "reservations". The Sikhs, like high caste Hindus, resent the effort to increase scheduled caste and backward caste representation in government services. However, they differ from these groups in that angry Sikhs have the skills and resources to effectively resist government policy with violence, and they have a religious sanction for their claim to a major role in the armed forces.

The issue of derecruitment is very important for practical and ideological reasons. There must be well over 500,000 retired Sikh soldiers living in the Punjab, most of whom would like to place at least one male relative in the army, navy, or air force.

Further, Sikhs regard the newly recruited classes as inferior. As an old Sikh recruiting handbook stated, all Sikh traditions are ultimately martial traditions, and the Sikh community is reluctant to yield their special claim to "martial" status [51]. They find the norms of a secular democracy, where all groups are now regarded as "martial," [52] to be naive and misguided.

### Resentment and Mutiny

There is a long history of resentment among Sikhs in the armed forces -- especially the army. No Sikh has ever become chief of the army staff, despite the great over-representation of Sikhs in the senior ranks of the army. In 1962 six of the Indian army's lieutenant-generals were Sikhs (two of them were to die in a 1963 air crash). Out of 28 major-generals thirteen were Sikhs, and of seventy-nine brigadiers, there were thirty Sikhs [53]. Sikhs failed to reach the position of COAS in 1969 and 1974 when non-Sikh generals received extensions in their term of service. There is a belief that other groups within the officer corps do not treat Sikh officers with proper respect. For the most part, however, Sikh soldiers have had a brilliant reputation and had no incentive or inclination to support terrorist, separatist, or other extreme dissident Sikh groups. Indeed, they had been deeply involved in the many anti-terrorist and counter-insurgency operations undertaken by the Indian army, especially in the northeast.

Ironically, it was the anti-terrorist efforts intended to cope with disturbances at the Asian Games that precipitated active dissent among retired Sikh officers. Many of them were harassed en route to New Delhi and several then proceeded directly to the Punjab, offering their services to the Akali agitation. Maj -Gen Jaswant Singh Bhullar has been quoted as on this episode:

We had gone to Delhi and I found that in spite of the fact that we showed them my identity card, we were taken out of the bus at about nine places in Harayana. I told them I was a



retired army officer but they did not listen and were very rude and abusive I felt very humiliated I have taken part in practically every war and been wounded twice It was very upsetting to think that I had to prove my patriotism in this country and to think I needed a passport or some document in order to be able to go to Delhi [54]

Worse was to come

Several thousand Sikh ex-servicemen met in a convention at Amritsar on January 23, 1983 Among them were five retired major generals and other retired officer of general rank sent their messages of support The convention provided the leadership for a Volunteer force which the Akalis began to organize in March-April, 1983 Several senior retired officers joined Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and helped train his followers [55] One, Maj -Gen Shubeg Singh, had earlier organized the Mukhti Bahini and was a recognized expert in insurgency warfare

By the time Operation Bluestar was launched, most Sikh units had been moved out of the Punjab They were not informed of the advance on the Golden Temple, and about two thousand Sikhs in a variety of training and active field units mutinied While the government attempted to minimize the seriousness of the mutinies, it is known that they included the Sikh Regimental Center, units guarding Santa Cruz airport in Bombay, and combat units in Rajasthan Jawans and officers from these units may have fled to Pakistan

Many Indians were surprised at the Sikh mutiny, but they should not have been All Indian army regiments bind their members with a religious

as well as a civil oath, a practice which the British merely carried over from earlier Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim armies. Sikh soldiers are accompanied into battle by unit priests and the Granth Sahib. The perceived desecration of their religion signalled a call to arms because of their oath, not in contradiction to it.

The situation in the Punjab in 1984-85 was grave from both the Sikh perspective and the army's. Sikhs, including at least 300,000 retired service personnel and their families, were subject to even harsher laws and regulations than those enforced in Nagaland, Mizoram, and elsewhere [56]. Some of the Sikh community have undergone a revolutionary alteration in their self-image, from a "we" which included Hindus, in opposition to Pakistan, to a "we" which excludes Hindus and has rediscovered the many common elements between Sikhism and Islam [57]. This is truly the stuff out of which new nations are made, and the Khalistan movement received support from Sikhs within India as well as outside it. This was support offered by default. Conversations with retired Sikh officers indicate a realistic appraisal of the weaknesses inherent in "Khalistan," but a fatalistic willingness to support the cause in the absence of what they regarded as fair terms from the government of India [58].

As for the Indian army, their occupation of the Punjab is unprecedented and dangerous. There was no possible military solution to the Punjab situation. Yet, the army was called upon to supervise the most intimate and detailed aspects of life in the state. This further embittered the Sikh population in the Punjab, and caused the army to regard all Sikhs -- including those in the armed forces -- as potential terrorists. No "aid to the civil power" doctrine can provide effective

guidelines for such a situation [59] No wonder that the army has welcomed the Punjab's gradual return to normalcy via the political process

### Strategic Considerations

One complicating feature of the Punjab crisis has been its strategic location From India's perspective, there are important objectives in Pakistan's Punjab, although new strategic plans seem to indicate a thrust in Rajasthan and Kashmir, rather than Punjab However, the major road and rail routes to Kashmir run north through Punjab, and important canals run south to Rajasthan, the army needs the active cooperation of all Punjabis to fight a major war with Pakistan In 1965 and 1971 that cooperation was freely and generously offered by Sikh farmers, transport owners, and merchants In 1984-85 the Indian army could not trust the local population The army and the various paramilitary units in the Punjab had to cope with numerous acts of sabotage, despite an extended curfew In the event of a crisis with Pakistan or in Kashmir, such sabotage would severely hamper the movement of troops, supplies and food

Finally, the Punjab crisis had one unprecedented impact upon the Indian armed forces Given the evidence of the mutinies that occurred in June, 1984, the temporary alienation of retired Sikh officers, and the close links between Sikhs in and out of the military, assume that no Sikh unit was fully trusted, especially in a situation which involved in the Punjab itself The government made unprecedented statements about the attempts to "spread disaffection in the ranks of the armed forces" -- the situation may have been worse [60] The overall integrity of the Indian armed forces, especially the army, may have been badly if temporarily

weakened If Sikhs comprise about 12% of the army, then the effective fighting strength of the army was probably reduced by at least that figure (more, if non-Sikh units must be deployed so as to contain another mutiny) [61]

This decline in the efficiency and reliability of the Indian armed forces in 1984-85 was probably greater than the increase in the capabilities of Pakistan's armed forces since 1982, the two combined do not add up to a shift in the strategic balance between India and Pakistan, but it must reduce Indian dominance to mere superiority This poses no immediate threat to India since the present Pakistani leadership is not likely to engage in any strategic adventurism, but a further decline in relative Indian capabilities would create new temptations and new problems A different Pakistani leadership might meddle in Kashmiri or Punjabi politics, safe in the knowledge that India had lost its capacity for escalation dominance, conversely, an insecure India might turn to nuclear weapons to make up for its relative decline in conventional capabilities, finally, a worsening of the Punjab crisis could lead to open guerilla warfare in that state, widespread sabotage, and the breakdown in the integrity of the Indian armed forces if their critical Sikh component should be removed

## VII Conclusion

The Indian armed forces are under strict constitutional constraints and play a very limited role in the central decision making process, although they have somewhat more operational authority than many of their foreign counterparts. Because of India's insecure regional environment, they must devote a great deal of time to preparation and planning for war (this would seem obvious, but most armies in Latin America and Africa will never have to fight). The Indian armed forces are sending more and more trained individuals into civilian society every year, and their role in the vast military production industry is also growing. The domestic law-and-order role of the army has dramatically increased in recent years, and there is also a new trend for civilian politicians to praise some of the military virtues while asking the armed forces to commit themselves to specific social and ideological goals.

None of this adds up to a dramatic change in the historically limited political role of the Indian armed forces. There will be no coup in India, there is no chance of a "colonels" or "brigadiers" conspiracy to seize power, although there are some angry and many disillusioned officers, especially among the Sikhs. There may be further terrorism, but the structure of the Indian civil-military system is fundamentally sound, and -- for most Indians -- the legitimacy of the political system remains high. Our frequent allusions to Pakistan have indicated that under certain circumstances a professional army committed to democratic politics can intervene to reform the system, and many Indian observers are properly concerned that India might now be where Pakistan was in the mid-50s [62]

However, the military in Pakistan have acted to protect not only their interests but Punjabi interests, whereas no single ethnic group dominates the Indian armed forces. Further, Pakistan was in a more precarious strategic situation than India, and its generals had developed direct foreign ties to military suppliers which enhanced their authority. Finally, the Pakistani political system never put down as deep roots as India's, and the Pakistan army could govern more effectively than civilians. The Indian armed forces have no such foreign ties and they openly dismiss the idea of seizing power and governing India's more complex and sprawling political system.

In sum, from the perspective of sustaining India's democracy, the Indian armed forces have made a major positive contribution as they have carried out their duties with competent professionalism, and they have made a negative contribution in that they have not sought power -- or even influence. This historic achievement is not to be taken lightly and certainly deserves more attention and study. However, we have identified a number of vulnerable points in the Indian system. We conclude this chapter by noting these, and how they might lead to a change in the relationship between India's democracy and its armed forces.

#### A New Constitution?

The constitutionally-determined role of the Indian armed forces is quite narrow and specific. The President remains the commander-in-chief while policy direction is provided by the prime minister. One of the strengths of the present constitutional arrangement is that it provides some check on a prime minister tempted to politicize the military.

However, there are frequent discussions of a change in this structure, moving towards elements of a French or American system in which the presidency becomes a more "political" office. In such a system the military would find it even harder to resist efforts to politicize them, and to conform to a particular political or social ideology. Any significant alteration in the Indian Constitution in this direction appears now to be unlikely, but if it were to occur, it would be in response to a sense of peripheral decay and central weakness in India's federal structure.

Somewhat more likely is a gradual, even informal, modification of the Indian federal balance with the military and paramilitary forces as pawns in a subtle struggle for power. This process has been underway for some time, particularly in those Indian states with non-Congress governments. They resist the introduction of the regular armed forces or centrally controlled paramilitary units, and have instead begun to create their own armed militias [63]. They have the right to do so in order to maintain law and order (a state responsibility), but it has also been argued that this right is not absolute, and that the Union government has "overriding" law and order responsibilities [64]. This controversy contains the seeds of intense Union-state conflict, up to and including serious violence, and if pressed to that point, further military involvement in the management of an Indian state.

#### From Objective to Subjective Civilian Control?

If officers are further encouraged to conform to a dominant political and social ideology, and they do, they will compromise their conservative

institutional perspective on national issues and begin to formulate political and social positions of their own. While this may suit the politicians in the short run, sooner or later it will lead to a divergence based on the corporate interests of the officer corps (at the very best), or a split in the officer corps, or the movement of the officer corps in directions more extreme than those now contemplated by the politicians. The acceptable price of civilian control is a military with essentially inward looking, conservative views. In the past, this ethic was strengthened by the class origins of the officer corps, but now such views must be inculcated. It is tempting to ask the military to serve political ends -- increasingly as saviors of the law and order situation -- but each such request further politicizes the military by bringing them into too close contact with civilian society and by placing more and more civilian tasks in their hands. And, while force is effective in the short run it will also fail and the military will then blame their failure on civilians. A controversy has grown up around the purported success or failure of "Operation Bluestar," with the military blaming poor civilian intelligence for their own problems in rooting out Bhindranwale and his supporters, the military apparently demanded -- and received -- a free hand when they were called out in over forty Indian cities to control rioters after Mrs Gandhi's assassination, and have been fulsome in praise of their own operations as if to show the rest of India that they really could carry out a domestic military operation with speed and skill [65]. It is true that these events are unprecedented and that disasters of this magnitude may never reoccur, but the rapid expansion of the army's role after Bluestar

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and the assassination suggest that the armed forces were on the edge of a new activism

### Changes in the Strategic Environment?

Some states, most notably the United States and Great Britain, historically limited the role of the army by keeping it small or adopting strategies which emphasized the role of the navy. India cannot do this as it must maintain a large standing army within its own borders in a high state of readiness. De Tocqueville and other democratic theorists argued that democracy and a large standing army were incompatible, but India seems to have so far managed both. Is this an historical anomaly, and will changes in the strategic environment, necessitating changes in the size or structure of the armed forces, have an impact on India's democracy?[66]

It is hard to predict the future of India's regional environment, as there are new factors which might lead to both greater and lesser conflict. On the one hand the Soviet Union has occupied Afghanistan, perhaps permanently, and there is no indication that they can either win or be defeated. This has led to increased American interest in South Asia, arms for Pakistan, and strains in the Indo-Soviet relationship. The military are probably more distressed at this turn of events than most civilians, and are more attuned to the long-term strategic consequences of the Soviet occupation. This, and a feeling that civilian strategic incompetence is making things worse, might lead to greater military involvement in strategic decision-making.

Simultaneously, however, there has been a move towards regional integration, and possibly arms control, with the rise of SAARC (South Asian

Association for Regional Cooperation) and expanded bi-lateral Indo-Pakistani talks. Should these developments move ahead, the Indian armed forces might find themselves less important to India's overall strategic position, and even asked to engage in a form of regional arms control. Some generals would not be averse to this, as they would prefer a smaller but better equipped military establishment, surplus manpower could be absorbed into the paramilitary forces, which in turn could be upgraded.

Unlike many other armies, I believe that the Indian armed forces would accept a cut in levels as part of a regional peace settlement. There is a greater risk to Indian democracy from an increase in regional conflict, with its concomitant growth in dependency upon the Soviet Union and the fueling of the military's appetite for weapons and manpower than a step-by-step process of normalization with Pakistan and China.

#### Expansion of the Aid to the Civil Role?

The expansion of the army's law and order function is perhaps the most dangerous trend of all, from the point of view of military integrity and an expanding military role in politics. The past few years have seen a creeping military role, and in the Punjab, Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur and elsewhere "martial law" in all but name. The problem has, at last, been addressed by the popular media, and there is no question as to where the remedies lie [67]. The central reform must take place in the police -- which in turn requires effective political leadership at the state as well as union level. The linkage between the police, criminals, and corrupt politicians is potentially fatal to India's democracy. It only leads to further military intervention. This, in turn, is part of the

problem, not part of the solution, and is a sure road to enhanced military involvement in politics. India is well below the threshold at which the military decides that it should rule if it is going to be asked to do so by civilians, but every additional aid to the civil operation brings it that much closer. With the repeated breakdown of police and paramilitary forces in dealing with politically contentious disturbances (such as the reservations agitation in Gujarat) the military are now regularly called in for flag marches and to maintain essential services. They are effective in these roles, but it is only a matter of time when (as in Pakistan) they become the object of popular hatred. And, when the police and paramilitary forces are themselves in revolt, the army must contend with armed and trained rioters.

#### Decline in Political Legitimacy?

The armed forces operate at the margin of moral behavior, and their obedience to civilian authority will continue only as long as that authority is regarded as legitimate -- and hence legitimize the behavior of the military. In a developed political system, such as India's, legitimacy is the consequence of effective performance in open and free elections and a degree of competence in matters which directly affect the military. In the case of Nehru and Mrs. Gandhi, there was also a direct, even charismatic link to the jawans, NCOs and JCOs, over the heads of the officers. No general could compare his own popularity with that of such leaders. However, in the absence of such a charismatic leader, civilian legitimacy must be based on the actions of politically effective and administratively competent ministers who are able to protect the vital

interests of the military and the state Civil servants cannot substitute for them, as they lack any mandate other than "civilian control," a mantra that will not survive genuine military concern

As for the future, it is apparent that the government of Rajiv Gandhi is trying to reverse a trend in which political legitimacy was increasingly personalized and thus increasingly vulnerable It is not yet self-evident that his government will be able to successfully resolve those foreign and domestic problems, most notably the Punjab crisis and relations with Pakistan, which are least amenable to charismatic appeal, but which are viewed by the military as vital to their own -- and India's -- survival However, the efforts made in this direction over a one-year period are more than encouraging

## FOOTNOTES

1 "Developing" is only a slightly less obnoxious term than "Third World" India has a fully developed political system and many economic and social problems There are richer countries incapable of dealing with problems of lesser magnitude, and no poorer countries better able to cope

2 There are no objective histories of the Indian military since independence, although there are very good studies of individual wars, units, battles, and problems For a survey see V Longer, Red Coats to Olive Green (Bombay Allied, 1974) by a former government official, and for a survey of current historical writing by a government historian, see Sri Nanadan Prasad, The Military History of India (Calcutta K P Bagchi, 1976) My own book, The Indian Army Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation (Berkeley University of California Press, 1971) examines the development of the professional officer in British India and the first twenty-four years of independent India

3 As many under-trials are killed in some Indian states as in all of South Africa's jails, there is now probably more genuine political freedom in parts of Pakistan than several Indian states This does not make South Africa or Pakistan "democracies," nor does it make India a "dictatorship," but it suggests caution in applying such undifferentiated labels

4 For a detailed survey of the British-trained Indian officers, see Cohen, The Indian Army, Chapter 5, "The Professional Officer in India "

5 For a survey of changed pay and promotion opportunities see Lt -Gen (ret ) M L Chibber, Leadership in the Indian Army During Eighties and Nineties (New Delhi U S I Papers, No 8, n d [1980?])

6 Maj -Gen K S Bajwa, "Military Leadership and the Changing Social Ethos," U S I of India Journal, July-September, 1978 Bajwa urges a "realistic"

approach as the Indian Army must work with poor quality officer material

7 Brig S K Sinha, "Career Prospects for Officers in Armed Forces," U S I of India Journal, July-Sept , 1968, p 265

8 Ibid See Lt -Gen M L Thapar, "Profession of Arms," The Statesman, Sept 14, 1982, for recent figures

9 Lt -Gen M L Thapan, "The Army as a Career," U S I of India Journal, July-Sept , 1977

10 See the article by Maj -Gen P M Pasricha on military leadership and corruption in Strategic Analysis, IDSA, New Delhi, November, 1983, Sudhansu Mohanty, "Honesty in the Forces," The Statesman, Calcutta, Feb 4, 1984, press coverage of the Samba spy scandal, the Larkin spy scandal, and the recent court martial proceedings against Maj -Gen D S C Rai in India Today, April 30, 1984

11 See, for example, R P Gautam, "Causes of Higher Secondary Students Preference for Military Career," U S I of India Journal, Oct -Nov , 1979

12 Bikram Vohra, "Fair Deal for our Fighting Men," Illustrated Weekly of India, June 23, 1974 For a rare feminist critique of the military's recruitment and employment policies see Dr A Mahajan, "Women in the Armed Forces A Case Study of India," a paper presented to the 1980 IUS Seminar

13 Exact figures are contained in "Asking for More," India Today, January 31, 1985, based on a leaked army document presented to the Fourth National Pay Commission Not only are the figures remarkable, but so is the explicit linkage of a demand for greater pay with the army's heightened internal security role the document begins with a discussion of Operation Bluestar and the security problems of the Punjab

14 A former army officer and current member of parliament has written an incisive post-Bluestar analysis of the assumption of the police function (a state subject) by the Union government in "The Security Mix-Up," Seminar (Using the Army), #308, April, 1985 See also K P Misra, "Paramilitary Forces in India," Armed Forces and Society, Spring, 1980, 371-388 Misra stated that having established the buffer between the military and society, the system had become coup-proofed A more cautious military assessment is Maj -Gen S K Sinha, "In Aid of the Civil Power," U S I of India Journal, June 1974, pp 115-123 He notes that the Indian military engaged in 476 "aid to the civil power" actions between 1961 and 1970

15 The Pakistan Army does this with the Khyber Rifles and other Frontier Force's Regiment wings, regular army officers are sent on deputation for two or more years, command a larger unit than they would in the regular army, and then return to their home regiment Stephen P Cohen, The Pakistan Army (Berkeley University of California Press, 1984)

16 Two books by Col Vijay Kumar Anand are of special merit Conflict in Nagaland (Delhi Chanyaka, 1980) and Insurgency and Counter-insurgency A Study of Modern Guerilla Warfare (Delhi Deep and Deep, 1981)

17 For an analysis of army behavior in an Indian state, Nagaland, see Nandita Haksar, "A Case Study," Seminar (Using the Army), #308, April, 1985

18 For three recent statements of IAF, IN, and army thought on first-strike or pre-emptive war, and the relationship to deterrence (especially of Pakistan) see, "India's Defense Policy and Doctrine for 1980s," the keynote address by CAS Air Chief Marshal Dilbagh Singh, before the Second Annual Session of the National Congress for Defense Studies, Poon University, June 7, 1982, "The Pre-Emptive Naval Strike in Limited Wars," by Cdr K R Menon, I N , U S I of

India Journal, Jan March, 1978, pp 46-54, and "Deep Thrust," by Lt Col J K Dutt, U S I of India Journal, Jan -March 1978, pp 69-74

19 For an excellent study of the regional military balance see Robert G Wirsing, "The Arms Race in South Asia Implications for the United States," Asian Survey, Vol 25, No 3 (March, 1985), 265-291

20 I reviewed the literature produced by the 1962 war in "India's China War and After," Journal of Asian Studies, Aug , 1971, 847-857 Since then, a number of additional important books have been published, triggered off by Lt Col J R Saigal, The Unfought War (Bombay Allied, 1979) which charges the senior military leadership with incompetence, one of the NEFA divisional commanders has his rejoinder in Niringan Prasad, The Fall of Towang, 1962 (New Delhi Palit and Palit, 1981)

21 An analysis of the implications of the Soviet invasion for regional security is in Stephen P Cohen, "South Asia After Afghanistan," Problems of Communism, Vol 34, (Jan -Feb 1985), 18-31 For a careful study of the issue see Elie D Krakowski, "Defining Success in Afghanistan," Washington Quarterly, Vol 8, No 2 (Spring 1985), 37-46

22 For a sampling of Indian military attitudes towards nuclear weapons, see E A Vas, "The Bomb," U S I of India Journal, Oct -Dec 1967, 309-320 , "A Nuclear Policy for India," U S I of India Journal, Jan -March, 1969, p 27 and D K Palit, ed , Nuclear Shadow over India, U S I of India, 1981

23 One of the most provocative studies of nuclear weapons by the armed forces was put together by K Sundarji, then (1981) commander of the army's College of Combat He later organized the military action in the Golden Temple, was appointed Vice Chief of the Army Staff, and became the Chief of the Army Staff in January, 1986 Sundarji argues for a tactical nuclear weapons capability



now, to be followed by a larger, strategic force in the future. He may be the first army chief to have carefully studied the nuclear issue. See K. Sundarji, ed., Effects of Nuclear Asymmetry on Conventional Deterrence (Mhow College of Combat, 1981).

24 For surveys of the defense policy process see Subrahmanyam citations below and A. L. Venkateshwaran, Defence Organisation in India (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1967), P. V. R. Rao, India's Defense Organization Since Independence (New Delhi: U.S.I. of India, 1977), P. R. Charu, "Civil Military Relations in India," Armed Forces and Society, Vol. 4, No. 1, November 1977, 3-28, and Jerrold F. Elkin and W. Andrew Ritzel, "The Debate on Restructuring India's Higher Defense Organization," Asian Survey, Vol. 24, No. 10, October, 1984, 1069-1085. For an excellent survey of the defense budgeting process see Raju Thomas, The Defense of India (Delhi: MacMillan, 1978).

25 Charu, p. 13

26 Venkateshwaran, p. 125. However, the most perceptive analyst and critic of the Indian defense policy process (and the weakness of both civilian and military personnel) is K. Subrahmanyam. He was also instrumental in getting the military to undertake operations research in the mid-60s. See "The Cultural Dimension of Managerial Reform," Defense Manager [Management], Oct., 1974, 10-16. Also, his books contain references to the problem of defense organization in India. See especially Perspectives in Defense Planning (New Delhi: Abhinav, 1972) and Defense and Development (Calcutta: Minerva, 1973).

27 The military have now begun attacking the process in earnest. Defense Manager (Later titled Defense Management) has carried several perceptive articles criticizing the present system as cumbersome, inefficient, and

wasteful For an explicit reference to Venkateshwaran, arguing a "crying need at the moment to decentralize decision-making in the higher echelons" see Brig V Nagabhusan, "Management of Defense Effort," Defense Manager, Oct , 1974,

20-25 The author, an engineer serving with a corps headquarters, suggests that the service headquarters should not only be the originators and implementers of plans but "should also be vested with adequate authority in both the spheres of approval of plans and apportioning of financial resources -- within the gambit of approved policies and appropriations " In other words, no civilian bureaucratic interference

28 Maharaj K Chopra, India The Search for Power (Bombay Lalvani, 1969) p 245 f

29 Gen Krishna Rao's suggestion that there should be a chairman of the JCS was promptly refuted by Indira Gandhi's civilian defense minister, R

Venkataraman The subject was extensively discussed in the Indian press, see Indian Express, June 5, 1982 and Times of India, July 14, 1982, and Elkin and Ritezel

30 K Subrahmanyam, who is less concerned about civilian control than an effective system of decision-making and war fighting is in favor of a Chief of the Joint Chiefs or a Chief of the Defense Staff, but wants a truly multi-service staff to be built up before the appointment, and then to be followed by giving the actual command of combat units to this CDS/CJCS system He sees individual service parochialism and pride as a barrier to good defense management, not as an aid to a "divide and rule" system of civilian control "Chief of Defense Staff for India," Defense Manager, April, 1975, 5-8

31 Sinha had taken over as Vice-Chief of the Army Staff in January, 1983, expecting to become Chief a year later Instead Vaidya's appointment was

announced on May 31, 1983 Sinha is the author of two military books and an important study on Indian defense organization, Higher Defense Organization in India (New Delhi USI of India, 1980) The best account of the whole episode is in India Today, December 31, 1983 This is reproduced, along with other documentary material, and a brief biography of General Sinha, in a volume issued by Sinha's supporters in Bihar -- he was the only Bihari general in the Indian army See D P Singh, The Supersession Spotlight on Lt Gen S K Sinha (Patna Parijat Prakashan, 1984)

32 Both stories in The Hindu International Edition, January 8, 1983

33 The most influential of these has been Neville Maxwell, who has written that the 1965 war brought the Indian Army "into a position of respect and influence within the state parallel to that which the Pakistan Army had enjoyed from the beginning," that the deterioration of the Indian polity was creating a "vacuum", and that "military government would solve few if any of India's problems, but unless present trends are reversed continued avoidance of military intervention in the 1970s would be more surprising than intervention itself " Times (London), January 28, 1969

34 Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, "Generals and Politicians in India," Pacific Affairs, Spring, 1964, pp 5-19

35 See, for example, June Kronholz, "The Big Indian Army is Tough, Respected, Keeps out of Politics," Wall Street Journal, September 16, 1981, Mohan Ram, "The Generals Stand Aloof," Far Eastern Economic Review, Feb 27, 1981, and Salamat Ali, "In Step with Tradition," Far Eastern Economic Review, May 31, 1984

36 Lieut -Gen S K Sinha, Of Matters Military (New Delhi Vision Books, 1980), p 37 For a discussion of the armed forces expanding aid to the civil

power activities see Jerrold F Elkin and W Andrew Ritezel, "Military Role Expansion in India," forthcoming

37 See the useful survey of the police-paramilitary breakdown by the former director of the BSF, is in K Rustomji, "Dealing with Disorder," Seminar (Using the Army), #308, April, 1985 The same issue contains an extensive bibliography on internal security matters

38 For an analysis see A G Noorani, "The Terrorist Ordinance," Economic and Political Weekly, July 28, 1984

39 Brig A R Siddiqi (ret ), "Indian Army in Assam Some Implications," Dawn, Lahore, Feb 23, 1983 Kuldip Nayar has similarly written about the ambiguous role that the Indian army played in the removal of Dr Farooq Abdullah as Chief Minister of Kashmir, suggesting that the dependency of the Indian government on the military was more and more resembling Pakistan's earlier experiences The Telegraph, Calcutta, July 24, 1984

40 The question of political influence in the military has been sharply debated in the military, especially since Indira Gandhi came to power For two contrasting views see Brig N B Grant, "The Committed Soldier," U S I of India Journal, April-June, 1974, pp 134-137 and Brig J Nazareth, U S I of I Journal, July-September, 1972, pp 228 ff Grant argues that some compromise with Indira Gandhi's call for "deeply involved, deeply committed" civil servants cannot help but be applied to the military Nazareth takes a much tougher line against "the danger of being infected" since the armed forces were once before "emasculated by unscrupulous politicians" it could happen again, democratic armies face a greater danger than those in dictatorships for they are under greater political pressures to conform, the triple threat of becoming physically flabby, infected with "the lust for money or personal gain" and "political

interference" all confront the Indian Army, and only strict adherence to professional standards can preserve the military itself, and in the long run the state it defends

41 Although Mrs Gandhi emphasized the martial virtues of discipline, obedience, and order, especially during the Emergency (1975-77), she was careful not to involve the armed forces in the Emergency, relying entirely on the police and paramilitary forces. No studies have been made, but my impression is that the military generally supported the Emergency. Their views on that period closely resemble those of the Pakistan army: the trains ran on time, taxi drivers were polite and did not overcharge, and the entire country was more serious, disciplined, obedient -- in fact, it was more like the military. Like their Pakistani counterparts, Indian officers want a country as good as the army, they also fear the deterioration of the political and social order, with troublesome consequences for the armed forces.

42 Stephen P. Cohen, "The Military," in Henry C. Hart, ed., Indira Gandhi's India (Boulder: Westview press, 1976) p. 210

43 Romesh Thapar, An Indian Future (New Delhi: Allied, 1981). See also "The Military Establishment," Economic and Political Weekly, Bombay, May 12, 1979, and "The Militarisation of Indian Politics," EPW, July 28, 1984.

44 Brig. N. B. Grant (ret.), "Apolitical or Committed?," Hindustan Times, September 3, 1984.

45 Those concerned about the possible Pakistanization of India might consult Stephen P. Cohen, The Pakistan Army, and Hasan Askari Rizvi, The Military and Politics in Pakistan (Lahore: Progressive, 1976).

46 The Telegraph, Calcutta, November 11, 1984 and Washington Post, November 1, 1984.

47 The Indian Navy and Indian Air Force do not recruit by class. Some of the army branches, e.g. engineers, recruit on a territorial basis. Thus, Sikhs living in South India can join the Madras Sappers, and Sikhs living anywhere in India can join the IAF and IN.

48 Cohen, The Indian Army, pp. 187 ff.

49 Sainik Samachar, January 1981, p. 8.

50 There are different estimates of the number of Sikhs in the Indian armed forces. The Economist (June 16, 1984) states that the two Sikh regiments together account for about 16,000 soldiers (roughly equivalent to a full division), but that the total number of Sikhs in the army is about 95,000, implying that there are about 79,000 Sikhs in other infantry regiments and in various other fighting and support arms. Sanjoy Hazarika of the New York Times has quoted a "military analyst" that there were about 20,000 Sikhs in the Indian army, or 2% of its strength (June 14, 1984). This figure must exclude Sikhs outside of their two regiments. No source gives figures for Sikhs in the IAF and IN, but the percentage of pilots must be very high, as all pilots are officers, and there are many more Sikh officers in the armed forces than other ranks -- perhaps 20% of the total.

51 "All Sikh traditions, whether national or religious, are martial, in times of political excitement -- and to the Sikhs politics and religion are closely allied -- the militant spirit re-asserts itself." Maj. A. E. Barstow, 2/11th Sikh Regiment, Sikhs (Handbooks for the Indian Army, Calcutta, Central Publications Branch, 1928), p. 40. This is one of the recruiting handbooks written for officers commanding particular regiments, in this case, Sikhs.

52 Cohen, The Indian Army, p. 190.

53 These figures from Dr Hasan Askari Rizvi, "Sikhs and the Indian Army," The Muslim (Islamabad), April 29, 1984

54 Tavleen Singh, "Bhindranwale's Generals," The Telegraph, Calcutta, June 18, 1984

55 Ibid , and Saijev Gaur, "Akali-Army Connection," Indian Express, Bombay, Nov 18, 1982

56 Their sense of hurt and alienation is vividly present in much of the literature distributed overseas by various Sikh groups and individuals For a perceptive analysis see Jaswant Singh, "Punjab The Challenge Within," Illustrated Weekly of India, June 24-30, 1984, and for an eyewitness report of martial law in the Punjab see Sahnaz Anklesaria, "Fall-out of Army Action A Field Report," Economic and Political Weekly, July 28, 1984

57 Pakistanis, who have reason to be pleased at the opportunities presented to them by the disaffection of the Sikhs, are cautious in their support of Khalistan The similarities between Sikhism and Islam are superficial, although maps of the erstwhile Khalistan do not include any Pakistani territory, historic Sikh kingdoms included much of what is now Pakistani Punjab and the Northwest Frontier Province, finally, "Khalistanis" openly speak of "balancing" Pakistan and India From a Pakistani perspective, therefore, support for Khalistan not only risked alienating and angering India but -- should it be successful -- could worsen Pakistan's strategic position, let alone stimulate its own internal dissidents to renewed action

58 The 1985 agreement between Rajiv Gandhi and the Akali Dal, followed by a series of political concessions and an election in the Punjab represent a turning point in the restoration of civil order in the state and reconciliation with the Sikh community While violence is likely to continue, it now appears

unlikely to spread to Sikh units. The potential political role of retired officers in India is a subject of considerable importance about which little is known (other than they were prominent in the Khalistan and Bhindranwale movements). For an insightful report see Hugh and Colleen Gantzer, "Alienation of ex-Servicemen," Indian Express, Bombay, July 27, 1983, and A. L. Bery, "The Retired Soldier: A Sentimental and Material Alienation," The Statesman, Calcutta, October 18, 1983.

59 A distinguished retired army general, Eric Vas, has published a brief study of the counter-insurgency problem in the Punjab. See "The Faces of Terrorism," Seminar (Using the Army), #308, April, 1985.

60 See the Press Trust of India story, "Forces Being Denigrated," based on Ministry of Defense "sources" which attack those who would "denigrate" the military in the press, as well as those who have forgotten the sacrifice of the army in the Golden Temple. Presumably, such sources are senior army officers angry at the sympathy given to the 2,000 or so Sikh soldiers who had mutinied. Also see "Leave the Army Alone," editorial, Times of India, Bombay, November 28, 1984, which also attacks "lurid" and exaggerated press reports of army brutality.

61 One writer suggests that the Indian army will have to maintain five divisions exclusively for internal security in the years to come: two in the northeast, two in Punjab, and one in Tamilnadu. If the Punjab crisis were to worsen the effective fighting strength of the Indian army would be reduced by at least two or three Sikh division-equivalents. India would still retain superiority over Pakistan, but the margin would be greatly reduced. G. C. Katoch, "Soldiers as Policemen," The Statesman, Calcutta, Jan 18, 1985.



62 Girilal Jain, "Army in Supportive Role," Times of India, Bombay, and Romesh Thapar, "The Militarization of Indian Politics," Economic and Political Weekly, July 28, 1984

63 For a discussion of Tripura's "Special Force Battalion," see The Statesman (Calcutta), December 12, 1984

64 An excellent discussion of federal aspects of the law and order problem is in several chapters of Abhijit Datta, ed , Union-State Relations (New Delhi Indian Institute of Public Administration, 1984), especially chapters and comments by K K Dass, G C Singhvi, and Amal Ray

65 After Mrs Gandhi's assassination Lieut -Gen G S Rawat (Vice-Chief of the Army Staff) summarized the situation in a press interview the army played a "vital role" in bringing the situation "totally under control," it was on a "mission of peace," and had to frustrate all attempts "to undermine the stability and integrity of the country," whether from within or without The delay of four days in restoring normalcy was explained by the fact that the army had to move units from some considerable distance to occupy all or parts of the states of Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Harayana, West Bengal and Tripura, as well as Delhi and many other cities, Times of India, Bombay, November 6, 1984 However, other reports indicate that much of the army was being diverted to the Pakistani frontier for annual maneuvers and that the actual aid-to-the-civil operations in Delhi were incompetently managed For example, the public was told that the army had arrived in Delhi on November 1, but it did not show up in force until three days later, nor was a joint army-police command post established, and army officers have complained of inadequate or misleading police and civilian intelligence See Richard Nations, Far Eastern Economic Review, November 15, 1984 and "Who are the Guilty,"

Economic and Political Weekly, Nov 24, 1984, a summary of the findings of the Indian People's Union for Democratic Rights and People's Union for Civil Liberties on the causes and consequences of the Delhi riots

66 Israel presents an interesting point of comparison. The Israelis are under even greater external pressure than India and -- proportionately -- maintain a larger military establishment. However, the close connections between the Israeli defense forces and Israeli society have prevented the growth of a separate "military" perspective on security and foreign policy issues. Many civilian officials have had extensive military experience. This is not the case in India where few, if any important politicians have ever served in the military.

67 See the excellent editorial in India Today, "Misusing the Army," May 15, 1985, and the articles by Sinha, Rustomji, Thapar, Vas and Jaswant Singh in Seminar (Using the Army), #308, April, 1985.